

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1628

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN SCUL ET FR

SUBJ: GREEN LIGHT FOR INTERNATIONAL AFAR EXPEDITION

REF: ADDIS ABABA 11158

1. AFTER TEN DAYS OF BACK AND FORTH DISCUSSIONS WITH THREE ETHIOPIAN CABINET MINISTRIES AND REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR IN WOLLO PROVINCE, REGARDING SECURITY SITUATION IN HADAR AND OTHER FORMALITIES, FRANCO-AMERICAN EXPEDITION HAS NOW RECEIVED FULL CLEARANCE FROM EPMG TO PROCEED ON NOV 10 TO ARCH-EOLOGICAL SITE IN EASTERN ETHIOPIA, WHERE IT WILL RESUME ITS EXPLORATIONS THROUGH MID-JANUARY. FOUR AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS UNDER LEADERSHIP OF THOMAS GRAY, PENDING ARRIVAL FROM U.S. DURING CLOSING WEEKS OF DR. DON JOHANSON.

2. GROUP PLANS TO TAKE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS INDICATED REFTTEL. IN ADDITION TO AFAR GUARDS, PROVINCIAL SECURITY POLICEMAN WILL BE WITH GROUP AT ALL TIMES. PERMISSION FOR TWO-WAY RADIO GRANTED BY EPMG, AND DAILY CONTACT WILL BE MAINTAINED WITH ADDIS. GROUP ALSO PLANS TO SEND LAND ROVER AND ETHIOPIAN DRIVER ON WEEKLY TRIPS TO CAPITAL FOR FOOD AND SUPPLIES.

3. I HAVE TOLD GRAY, WHO IS WELL AWARE THERE HAS BEEN GENERAL TROUBLE IN THE AREA, THAT DESPITE EPMG APPROVAL AND ARRANGEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE, EXPEDITION IS STILL CONTRARY TO MY BETTER JUDGMENT.FINAL DECISION, HOWEVER, HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BEEN HIS TO MAKE, AND I THEREFORE HAVE ASKED HIM TO EXERCISE

EXTREME CAUTION, WHICH HE HAS AGREED TO DO.

4. COMMENT: GRAY STRIKES US AS REASONABLY LEVEL-HEADED AND PRUDENT INDIVIDUAL AND PROBABLY WILL TAKE WHATEVER PRECAUTIONS HE CAN. PROBLEM IS THAT AREA IS SO ISOLATED THAT TROUBLE COULD COME AND GO WITHOUT ANYONE OUTSIDE BEING AWARE OF IT IN SUFFICIENT TIME TO BE OF ANY HELP. ETHIOPIANS ARE FULLY AWARE OF EXPEDITION AND WILL NOT WANT IT TO RUN INTO PROBLEMS WHICH MIGHT RESULT IN BAD PUBLICITY. STILL, THEIR CAPACITY TO INSURE SECURITY IS LIMITED. WE WILL KEEP OUR FINGERS CROSSED.
TIENKEN

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